

**Workforce Solutions - Deep East Texas**  
**415 S. First Street, Suite 110B**  
**Lufkin, TX 75901**  
**Operations Committee Minutes**  
**August 7, 2023**

**I. CHAIR ROBERT FITZPATRICK CALLED THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:02 PM.**

**MR. FITZPATRICK ANNOUNCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (WD LETTER 28-19) DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2019, REGARDING THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551 ALLOWING THE USE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING AS A METHOD FOR CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS, THE BOARD IS PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ITS BOARD MEETING AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE AND VIA VIRTUAL MEETING WEB LINK. HE ALSO SAID THE MEETING IS BEING RECORDED AND THE OPEN SESSION PORTION OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST. THE BOARD SERVES TWELVE (12) COUNTIES AND LISTED THE HOST LOCATION. PRESIDING OFFICER, ROBERT FITZPATRICK, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.**

**AFTER ROLL CALL, MR. FITZPATRICK CONFIRMED THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT:**

**Members Present:** Joe Clyde Adams, Robert Fitzpatrick, Ethan Herr, Marisa Phillips, Randy Roberts

**Members Absent:** Rebekah Burkhalter, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Jessica Rogers, John White

**Board Staff Present:** Mark Durand, Crystal Eason, Josh Fleming, Dara Harmon, Anna Holderberg, Debb Homman, Sarah Milligan, James Parry, Lauren Phipps, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, Karen Stubblefield

**Visitors:** Jessica Blair, Kevin Bradford, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Paul Dunn, Michelle Kennedy, Monica Peters-Clark, Shakia Roberts

**CHAIR ROBERT FITZPATRICK REMINDED THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.**

Chair Robert Fitzpatrick asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration regardless of whether they have a conflict and send it to the Board staff for recordkeeping.

**WELCOME OF GUESTS:**

Mark Durand introduced the Board's newest Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist, Crystal Eason.

**II. Public Comments**  
None

**III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – June 8, 2023**

Motion: Marisa Phillips made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.  
Second: Joe Clyde Adams  
In Favor: All  
Oppose: None  
Abstain: None  
Motion: Passes

**IV. Information Items**

**A. Student HireAbility Navigator Report**

Aubrey Jones' Report as Board's Student HireAbility Navigator, was presented by Mark Durand. It reports that during this quarter, she partnered with team members to begin coordinating foster youth meetings with local Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) partners to further outreach initiatives. It also highlights the newly organized Deep East Texas Champions for Children – created to assist disadvantaged youth and families with resources to achieve higher well-being. As a result of Ms. Jones presenting information regarding disabilities to participants at the 2023 Teacher Externship, an employer referred two (2) employees to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) allowing them to continue their jobs.

**B. Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist Report**

James Parry reported that the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists (WCEOS) have participated in multiple events with outside agencies and presented career exploration and career readiness. This resulted in multiple students being referred to the Workforce Centers and at least two (2) students hired in high-demand occupations. Workshops were streamlined and narrowed down for efficiency. New job-related scenarios have been added to the Virtual Reality (VR) events.

**V. Discussion/Possible Action**

**A. Action Item 23-14 WIOA Policy**

Staff recently reviewed the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy for technical changes and clarifications to update the policy, as follows:

*To be eligible for an Individual Training Account (ITA), participants must be eligible for training services, be unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, and related support services, including such sources as state-funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and federal Pell Grants; or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including federal Pell Grants (Page 21).*

Motion: Joe Clyde Adams made the motion to approve the WIOA Policy as presented.  
Second: Ethan Herr  
In Favor: All  
Oppose: None  
Abstain: None  
Motion: Passes

**B. Open Session Action, if any, as a result of Closed Session**

None

**VI. Board Reports**

**A. Workforce Center Report**

Ms. LaTreasor Cartwright, Project Director, started the report by sharing a customer success story. Jessica Blair reported on the rural services strategies and outreach efforts for third quarter of FY23. Workforce staff continue to visit all counties including counties that do not have workforce centers. Ms. Blair reviewed the Metrix Learning data, reporting 56 new users registered in third quarter of FY23 for Metrix



Learning courses, and eleven new customers registered for Metrix paid certification (Amazon AWS Solution Architect and Microsoft Office Specialist), which is paid for and sponsored by TWC. Seven of the eleven customers enrolled in the third quarter will take certification exams by August 31, 2023. TWC certification sponsorship is scheduled to end August 31, 2023. Mr. Durand said they hope to hear back from TWC before August 31<sup>st</sup> on whether the contract will be renewed. Ms. Blair reviewed the Greeter Report for Foot Traffic and Job Seeker Services provided. The YTD total of distinct users was 8,286. Shakia Roberts reviewed the WIOA enrollment report, with a total of 24 enrollments between Adult, Dislocated Worker, Out-of-School Youth, and In-School Youth for third quarter of FY23. Board Member, Randy Roberts, said, on behalf of Angelina College (AC), he appreciated all the referrals and that AC tries to refer back for workforce services. Shakia Roberts presented the Individual Training Accounts (ITA) for the quarter. Ms. LaTreasor Cartwright mentioned that eight (8) individuals previously employed with Portacool prior to the fire damage are interested in training. Portacool has rented a warehouse and hopes to call back some workers until their facility can be rebuilt. Ms. Cartwright summarized the Choices enrollment numbers and activities for third quarter of FY23. Ms. Cartwright reported still meeting or exceeding their goal of 50% a month performance for Choices measures. 15 of 21 performance measures are specific to WIOA.

**B. Child Care Services Report**

Michelle Kennedy reported on the Child Care Services (CCS) Performance Data, noting the Year-to-Date (YTD) target goal of 2,349 average children. The number of children enrolled was 2,390 but during this time of year the enrollment goes down because of public school starting and children returning to school. Ms. Kennedy reported a total of 101 Provider Agreements with 83 agreements in the Deep East Texas region and 18 agreements outside of the workforce delivery area. Agreements outside of the region typically occur due to parents living in the Deep East Texas region but may work in another region, and other agreements have been at the request of DFPS. Mark Durand stated that there are currently over 800+ children on the waitlist. Child Care Coordinator, Debb Homman provided updates regarding the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program, noting there are currently 45 TRS providers and 1,302 children in care at TRS centers.

**VII. Adjourn**

Chair Robert Fitzpatrick adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 3:53PM.

Duly passed and approved on this 14 day of November, 2023

  
Robert Fitzpatrick, Chair

Attest

  
Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant